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it is tried sees an increase of the registered titles. In Illinois the system is applicable only to Cook County. Mr. Massie prints on page 26 a letter from Recorder J. F. Connery of Cook County showing the increased registry there from year to year, and that the registrations in 1916 will break all records. At the time of writing there were \$120,000,000 of registered lands in Chicago, in over 7,000 separate tracts.

J. R. R.

THE LAW AND THE PRACTICE OF MUNICIPAL HOME RULE, by Howard Lee McBain. New York: Columbia University Press. pp. xviii, 724.

Before the close of the nineteenth century four states of the Union had adopted constitutional provisions designed to give some measure of home rule to the cities within their borders. In the first decade of the twentieth century six more states incorporated such provisions in their constitutions. Still later, in 1912 to be exact, four more states committed themselves to the principle of local autonomy. Steps in this direction have been taken recently by a number of other states, and the public generally seems to be awakening to the need for preventing undue legislative interference with internal municipal affairs. In such a situation the appearance of this book is opportune. Its pages discuss the various constitutional provisions adopted in this country to secure home rule for municipalities, the problems raised thereby, and the solution of these problems by the legislatures and courts of the various states. The problems of each state are treated separately and the whole unified by frequent cross references.

The book is divided into two parts. Part I is concerned almost entirely with the history of legislative interference with cities and the various expedients in the way of constitutional provisions that were resorted to in order to restrain the legislatures from unwarranted interference therewith.

Part II, which comprises by far the greater part of the volume, deals with the home rule provisions of the constitutions of those states which have given autonomy to their cities, the problems that have arisen in connection with legislation and charter making thereunder, and the practice of the legislatures and the decisions of the courts engaged in solving such problems. The author appears to have made a careful search of the reports of each state involved for decisions bearing on the problems of home rule and has placed the results of his search before his reader with full enough statements of facts and quotations from opinions to enable the reader to appreciate the problems and to examine, analyze, and compare the decisions of the courts without frequent reference to the reports themselves. Having made long and careful study of the history and general development of the home rule movement, the author is in a position to point out the errors of the courts due to a too narrow view of the problems presented to them, and he does this frequently and well.

In the last chapter, entitled, "Some General Conclusions," the author gives his readers his expert opinion on the character of the constitutional provisions that should be adopted in order to secure the most effective home rule in cities. In this chapter are anticipated many of the difficulties that are

likely to confront the reformer who seeks to remedy by constitutional amendment the evils of unwarranted legislative interference with municipalities, and the discussion in this connection should prove invaluable to persons drafting such an amendment.

The American people, notwithstanding many disappointing experiences in the past, still hold an unwavering belief in the efficacy of general principles written into their constitutions with little or no careful working out of the rules and machinery by and through which the principles are to operate. Most reform movements suffer seriously by reason of this outstanding fault of the American people in government, and local autonomy has been no exception to the general rule. In his preface the author says: "It seems probable that few if any of the more recent constitutional provisions granting home rule powers have been framed with an accurate and detailed knowledge of the legal problems to which similar provisions have elsewhere given rise. If they have been drafted with such knowledge at hand, the least that can be said is that the authors of these provisions have been inexcusably short-sighted," and his account of the operation of the constitutional provisions for local autonomy is a narration of disappointments and failures.

If we exercised no more care and foresight in drafting our contracts than we do in preparing our laws and constitutions, America would be on a par with Algeria or Somaliland as a commercial nation. In preparing contracts we make a study of the situations in hand, try to forecast the result of each provision of the instruments; in making laws we rush ahead without any intimate or definite knowledge of the situations we seek to remedy, and disregarding the experience of other states and countries, trust to Heaven to guide us aright. In the present volume the author has presented an account, in convenient and interesting form, of the various experiments in this country in home rule, which ought to guide reformers and legislators around the pitfalls that have swallowed up the efforts of their brothers. Will they avail themselves of it? With little faith that our hope will be realized, we trust they will.

G. S.